Voices in Bloom

Trace themes, genres, and styles in the Harlem Renaissance.

9.T.PM.1 "Demonstrate knowledge of dominant themes, genres, and verbal styles of literature from a particular time period."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline phrases that state a dominant theme, circle each genre or form, and number three examples of verbal style. Your marks will show how Harlem Renaissance artists used different kinds of writing to express their ideas.

Art in a Changing City

1. During the 1920s, many Black writers, musicians, and artists gathered in Harlem, a New York City neighborhood. Their creative flowering became known as the Harlem Renaissance. The period grew during the Great Migration, when many African Americans moved from the rural South to Northern cities. Artists explored pride in Black identity, the pain of racism, and the excitement and strain of city life. They did not all agree about how art should serve their community. Some sought beauty and individual expression, while others wanted art to challenge injustice directly.

2. Poetry was a major genre of the movement. Langston Hughes used rhythms and repeated sounds inspired by blues and jazz, music created and developed by Black Americans. In poems such as "The Weary Blues," his speaker notices music in a Harlem setting, linking ordinary life to art. Other poets used traditional forms. Claude McKay wrote the sonnet "If We Must Die," a tightly structured fourteen-line poem that responds to violent racism. These different verbal styles showed that Black writers could reshape both popular speech and established literary forms.

3. Fiction and drama also carried Harlem Renaissance ideas to audiences. Zora Neale Hurston's stories and novels drew on African American folklore and the speech she heard in Southern communities. Her use of dialect, words and grammar associated with a particular region or group, made characters sound distinct, though readers have debated how such writing is received. In the play "Mulatto," Langston Hughes examined racism within a divided family. Across these genres, artists often presented Black characters as complex people with dreams, humor, anger, and agency, rejecting shallow stereotypes common in earlier popular culture.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What two dominant themes from the Harlem Renaissance are named in the first paragraph?

2. How did Langston Hughes's verbal style in “The Weary Blues” connect his poetry to music?

3. Compare Claude McKay's genre or form with Zora Neale Hurston's genre or style. What did each writer use?

4. How did Harlem Renaissance artists challenge earlier popular stereotypes through their characters?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 60 to 80 word exhibition label for a Harlem Renaissance display. Identify one theme, name two genres or forms, explain one verbal style, and show how these choices challenged stereotypes, using only details from the passage.

ANSWER KEY

Voices in Bloom

GRADE 9 · 9.T.PM.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline phrases that state a dominant theme, circle each genre or form, and number three examples of verbal style. Your marks will show how Harlem Renaissance artists used different kinds of writing to express their ideas. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What two dominant themes from the Harlem Renaissance are named in the first paragraph?	**Pride in Black identity and the pain of racism.**
2	How did Langston Hughes's verbal style in "The Weary Blues" connect his poetry to music?	**He used rhythms and repeated sounds inspired by blues and jazz.**
3	Compare Claude McKay's genre or form with Zora Neale Hurston's genre or style. What did each writer use?	**McKay used a tightly structured sonnet, while Hurston wrote stories and novels drawing on folklore and Southern speech, including dialect.**
4	How did Harlem Renaissance artists challenge earlier popular stereotypes through their characters?	**They presented Black characters as complex people with dreams, humor, anger, and agency.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Harlem Renaissance artists explored Black identity and racism through several genres. Claude McKay used the tightly structured sonnet, while Zora Neale Hurston wrote fiction shaped by folklore. Hughes's poetry used blues and jazz rhythms and repeated sounds. These choices presented Black people as individuals with dreams, humor, anger, and agency instead of the shallow stereotypes found in earlier popular culture.

Accept supported themes such as city life or challenging injustice in addition to the listed answers. For the exhibition label, check for one accurate theme, two passage-based genres or forms, one accurate style detail, and a clear connection to rejecting stereotypes.